

5 STORIES

THE CONVICT'S FATE. THE STRANGE CAVALIER. THE CASTILIAN MAID.
THE FATAL NUPTIALS. TRUE LOVE.

99.

THE CONVICT'S FATE.

A SKETCH FROM FACT.

So before, behind, around thee like an armament of cloud, the black fate
labors onward. Hemans.

On the- - day of March 18—, might have been seen, in the country town of
L-, an unusual collection of people of every age, size, and sex. All the public
houses were filled to overflowing, and still there were many strangers
unable to obtain shelter, but the inhabitants of the village, with generous
hospitality, threw open their doors, and made the comers welcome. The
cause of this concourse is soon told. The day succeeding the one above
mentioned, had been set apart to inflict the utmost punishment of the law
on a criminal then lying in the prison. He was a man large in stature, and of
powerful strength. He had a short time before, in a moment of passion,
taken the life of one of his most intimate friends, a young man of promising
talents, and universally respected by a large circle of relatives and friends.
The criminal was arrested the day after the murder, tried, and sentenced to
death; and that sentence was to be carried out upon the morrow.

The day appointed for the execution was one of the most delightful of the
season. The sun rose with unusual splendor. But for one being that luminary
had no bright rays—to him there was no joy—no contentment—no happy
tranquil feelings swelling the heart with love and adoration. Desperate with

the thoughts of an ignominious death, he lay upon the floor of his cell, overloaded with chains, revolving in his mind some bold attempt at an escape—escape when naught but death stared him in the face—escape, when the very hope seemed the madness of despair! How was this to be accomplished? He was to be removed from the prison-house to the place of execution, which was about a mile distant, guarded by a portion of the militia of the county, carrying arms charged with ball cartridge. The only chance for escape would be when he was being removed from the cart to the scaffold, as at that period there would be the least suspicion of his intention. The attempt was desperate, but it was resolved upon.

At length the criminal was brought forth, clothed in the customary dress, and placed in the cart upon the coffin intended to receive his lifeless remains. He was pale and dejected; but with none of his energies impaired by long confinement. His eye, that no suffering could dim, flashed with more than its wonted brilliancy. The prison was built upon an eminence, and upon the spot where he now stood he could look down upon the preparations for his death, and calculate his chances for escape. One piercing glance revealed every thing—that glance proved sufficient

The procession moved slowly on. The bell, suspended in the cupola of the prison-house, tolled forth in single and dolorous notes, announcing the awful tidings of death: the crowd in front of the scaffold was immense, but behind, scarcely any persons were collected, in consequence of the ground being damp and marshy, and not affording as fine a view of the approaching spectacle as that in front, which, being slightly elevated, gave those farther off as good an opportunity of viewing the scene as those immediately under the scaffold.

As the sheriff motioned him out of the cart, the prisoner, apparently down cast and dejected, slowly rose and ascended the scaffold, but it was only a moment before he had sprung into the midst of the armed force below, and with the strength of a giant opposed every endeavor to stop his progress.

Life was before him— death was behind. He well knew that if retaken he would be shown no mercy, and it were as well to meet his death from the hands of those around him, as from the instrument of the law. With a tremendous effort he cleared the soldiery. Immediately a dozen muskets poured forth their murderous contents at his person, but he passed the ordeal harmless. Struck? with astonishment at the suddenness of the effort, the populace remained for a moment inactive, and then with a loud shout started in pursuit; but that moment of indecision gave the prisoner the advantage. Nothing could now stop his progress. Once only, a man in advance of the rest, threw himself in the path before the criminal; but with an herculean grasp the liberated convict seized and crushed him to the earth. On, on, he sped. Mile after mile, hill after hill was passed, but still his pursuers were close behind. Oh ! what hopes passed through that wretched beings mind, as with the swiftness of the deer, he fled for life. What resolutions of reform!—what deeds of virtue to be done presented themselves to his imagination ! It was a glorious thing to defraud death to leap from the grave at the moment lie felt himself sinking in. But what sight is that which meets his eye ! Directly in front of him ho perceives a vast body of fire glowing and burning immediately in his path. The sight causes his energies to slacken—he drops nearly exhausted—his pursuers approach nearer. He hears their shouts, and once more he springs forward, lie draws nearer to that vast body of fire, but, as he approaches, how changed the aspect before him. Joy ! joy! instead of fire, he now perceives the broad and majestic river, rolling on her downward course, her placid bosom reflecting the beams of the noonday sun, until the whole surface glowed like burnished silver.

In a moment ho was on the bank. Invigorated and cheered by newly-born hopes, his eye ranged the shore in every direction, but not a boat was to be seen. His pursuers were close behind him. But at length ho detected a small skiff that was anchored about twenty yards from the shore, and which his anxiety had caused

him at first to overlook. Without hesitation he plunged into the stream, and had scarcely reached the boat before his pursuers were on the bank. But he was safe from them. Fortunately for him there was a solitary paddle in the bottom of the boat, and, hastily slipping the rope over the stake to which it was secured, he darted out into the stream. In vain those congregated upon the shore searched for another boat in which to continue the pursuit, not one was to be found. Maddened with rage at being baffled, at the moment they thought escape was impossible, some sprang into the water to endeavor to reach the convict by swimming; but it was useless. They could not overtake their intended victim. Stopping for one moment, he stood upright in his frail bark and gave a loud laugh of defiance: then resuming his seat, he directed his course to the opposite shore. All fear had now fled. Once within the lines of the British possessions in Canada, it would be no difficult matter to secrete himself until a favorable opportunity presented itself for departing to the old world. But those shores he was destined never to reach. A more terrible death than that from which he had escaped awaited him.

The part of the river at which the prisoner attempted to cross was one that, unless superior skill was manifested, rendered the boatman liable to extreme danger. It was but a very short distance from the rapids that are generally considered the commencement of the foils of Niagara. At all seasons there is a very strong current leading to this point; but at this time the force of the current was considerably augmented, on account of a heavy freshet that had swollen the river to an unusual degree, thereby causing a greater body of water to rush toward the falls. The convict, whose mind was occupied with other thoughts, was not aware of this circumstance until he found himself gradually drawing closer to the terrible descent. At length, however, his eyes were opened to the extent of his danger. He at once perceived that there was no time for deliberation, and using every effort in his power, he applied his oar. For a moment the boat stood still, and then slowly moved up the stream; but before it had proceeded many yards the paddle that he held in his hand, unable to resist such an unusual pressure,

snapped asunder close to the handle. The blade shot far, far from his reach, and beyond all possibility of recovery. Who can tell his emotions at this juncture? In a moment all the actions of his past life rushed through his mind, the few good deeds vanishing like the morning mist before the many evil ones that now rose up before him in accusation. But one struck more terror into his soul than all the rest. It was the murder of his late victim. He fancied he beheld the sufferer, pale and bloody, rising before him. His flesh crept, his eyes rolled horribly, his powerful frame quaked and trembled. Nothing could drive that sight away. In vain he covered his face

with his hands—in vain he cast himself in the bottom of the boat and grovelled like a worm—that ghastly form was still before him.

On, on rolled the stream, and with it the bark that was carrying the murderer to destruction. It was now within a few yards of the rapids. He perceived the imminent danger of his situation without the power of avoiding it. His shrieks for aid were heard on either shore, and struck terror to every heart. Cold drops of agony collected upon his forehead, and chased each other down his pale cheeks. "Oh, God!" he cried, "if succor could arrive, how willingly would I yield up life upon the scaffold." Once more his energies appeared to revive. He sprang up in the boat, and, with a maddened effort, seized and tore the only seat from its place, and used every endeavor to stem the current that was carrying him to his death. But how vain was the effort! All hope had now fled, he was in the rapids, and whirling on with the velocity of lightning. Another breathless pause and he is at the brink of the falls. One moment more and the murderer stands in the presence of his God.

About a week after the day upon which the above events transpired, the lifeless remains of a man were taken from the river several miles below the falls. The remains were large in stature, and from the proportions of the body, were supposed, when possessed with life, to have been endowed with almost superhuman strength. No one could be found to recognize the body,

the features being so mutilated. But by more than one it was supposed to be all that was left of one who had escaped death in one form, only to meet him in another more terrible. t. s.

Sonnets of Milton. —The sonnets of Milton are not the least remarkable of his productions, but fully evince the genius of the author of Paradise Lost Who has read, without feeling all the fervent indignation of Milton, the sonnet entitled " On the late Massacre in Piemont? n

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;

Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,

When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones, Forget not: in thy book record their groans Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled Mother with infant down the rocks. Their groans The vales redoubled to the hills, and they To Heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway The triple tyrant; that from these may grow A hundred fold, who, having learned thy way.

Early may fly the Babylonian wo.



101

TRUE LOVE.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

" And so you believe in love!" said Edgar Thurston, knocking the ashes from his cigar, and looking calmly into his friend George Burton's face, " I really thought better of you."

" I am sorry that I have lost your good opinion, but I congratulate myself that it has been lost in a good cause. I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I believe in love, ay! more, that every young man ought to rejoice at the existence of a passion which is his salvation. You smile—but shew me the young man who is truly in love, and I will shew you a person, all whose views of life are brightened, whose heart is softened as by the dews of heaven, and whose thoughts are purer and holier than they ever were before. Women are all akin to the skies, and never grow debased until either a husband or lover makes them so—when we love them, therefore, we insensibly imbibe a portion of their purity, which remains with us until our own brutish nature drags us down again to earth, too often, alas! bringing our wives with us. But, while the first romance of the passion endures, we are different beings from what we have been, or ever will be again. The very sky seems brighter; the wind is more musical than of old ; the voice of the commonest rivulet fills us with strange delight; and we look on all men with kindlier feelings, out of regard to her whom we love. A young man who is truly in love cannot be guilty of criminal or dishonorable conduct. How many have been led to pause in some base act— how many have been saved the first step in crime—how many have been rescued from the lowest depths of vice by the influence of some pure hearted girl, whose love had become to the erring individual ' the jewel of great price,' and who, he knew, would shrink back, in her heavenly-mindedness from contamination with such a wretch as they either were, or contemplated becoming! No—no—love is the dearest gift to man! without it earth would be a Golgotha, and life a den of torment."

" Heigho! how eloquent you have grown. One would think you were reciting a popular lecture, or making the agreeable to some sentimental Miss in her teens. With you love is the great panacea for all human ills—just like the

celebrated pills, which cure every thing from corns to consumption. Really, my dear fellow, I am shocked that a man who ought to know so much of the world, should talk in this strain about a passion, in which not two sensible men out of a hundred believe. I don't mean to say that there is not a certain feeling which every lover entertains for his mistress, or husband for his wife; but then this feeling is no more what you call love than women arc angels, or wives one's 'household god.' To give you an idea of what I mean, you must follow me in an analysis of our feelings toward the other sex—for I intend to argue this matter with you, and not go off in declamation, which, however pretty, is not the sort of thing to give a man of sense."

" Well—I listen."

" What then are legitimate subjects of admiration in the other sex? You will say personal qualities—beauty, accomplishments, &c.—so will say every boarding-school girl. I will take you on your own ground, and to make the argument plainer instance our own cases. For what, then, would a girl marry you? A romantic Miss in her teens would say she loved you because you were the first one that struck her fancy—that she had often met very estimable men for whom she could not entertain like feelings—and that, the fact was you were the handsomest man she ever saw, and she loved you—and there is the end of it. Now why does the girl answer thus? Because she has not followed the instructions of the old Greek 'Know thyself/ and so, unacquainted with the habits of her own mind, could not detect the causes of its preference or dislike. Had this girl been trained in habits of analysis she could have instantly told you what she admired in her lover. You needn't shake your head—I know I am right; for if we can dissect the operations of our minds in other matters, we can do it in the matter of love. For instance, I meet a lady at an evening party—she is pretty, witty, accomplished, in short the belle of the evening—I single her out for my attentions—those attentions are favorably received—and it ends with my going home particularly well pleased with myself and all around me, and so full of my new acquaintance that I make a fool of myself by dreaming of her. Now what

do you call this feeling]"

" Love, to be sure—or, at least, its incipient stages."

" Not a bit of it, or, if so, then love is not the exalted feeling you say it is; for the feeling I experience, in the case I have instanced, is nothing but gratified vanity— sheer vanity. I am flattered with having engrossed the time of the belle of the evening, and so I go home and dream of her forsooth, just as, when a child, I used to dream over a new top, or a Christmas box of sugar plums. And gratified vanity is, in nine cases out of ten, the true origin of what folks call love. If a man is distinguished for either beauty, talents, or manners, he can win almost any girl, for she hears him talked of, and it gratifies her to have her name linked with his as her lover. She borrows added lustre from his reputation, as the moon shines by the reflected light of the sun. Why else is it that a minister, or lawyer can always succeed best with the fair sex? So you see that the secret of this romantic passion may be traced to the very weaknesses of our nature. And now talk of love, bah!"

" Then, for heaven's sake, what is the sentiment we experience for the other sex?"

"I'll shew you presently. To return—I said that any man acquainted with the operations of the human mind can analyze the feeling—be it what it may—he experiences for another. Nor is the feeling of love more difficult to be analyzed than the feeling of admiration we entertain for a fine picture, and it is only your simple folks who don't understand themselves, that deck love in such romantic colors, and all because they feel a sentiment they won't take the trouble to comprehend. But, in every case, if we enquire dispassionately, ere shall be able to arrive at the true cause of our preference for another. I have instanced one case, that in which gratified vanity is the origin of such a preference. There are others. One man is admired for his face, another for his talents, a third for his manners, another for his figure, and—heaven help us!—not a few for their whiskers. By dwelling on these real or fancied

perfections, to the exclusion of his faults, the poor girl gets finally to believe him a second Adonis; while another lady, by taking an early prejudice against him, and regarding only his faults, learns to look on him as a boor, a Caliban, or a fool. Instances of all this you have seen. Now, understand me, it is not every one who is aware of these things—in fact most of the other sex are blind to them, and so devoutly believe in love, for all the world like their great great grandmothers who believed in ghosts and witches. My conclusion, therefore, from all these facts and deductions is—but stay till I light my cigar."

" Well, now what is your conclusion?"

" That there is no such thing as love; but, on the contrary, the feeling we entertain for the other sex is a very common-place affair, altogether under our control, and capable of being crushed or allowed to increase just as we please."

" Regulated as you would regulate the depth of water in a well, eh!"

" You needn't sneer. If my liking of a young lady is to be attributed to her beauty, and I don't wish to marry her, I've but to think her ugly, or keep out of her sight, and my weakness is cured. If I wish to marry a certain girl, from a pecuniary or any other reason, I 've but to pick out some real or imagined perfection in her, dwell on it day and night, and by the end of a month— it may be a fortnight—I 'll have worked myself up into quite a respectable passion for her. There is no such thing, then, as the love you talk of: our feeling for a sweetheart or wife is akin to our liking for a friend, I will not say a picture or a horse. After marriage we acquire a habit of respecting each other—that is, in the few cases where there is no quarrel—and so live on till death do us separate, after a fashion which the world calls a pattern of conjugal fidelity," and with these words, the speaker lolled back in his chair, and took a complacent whiff at his cigar.

" I have heard you to the end," said Burton, rising, after a pause, " because I wished to see how far sophistry would carry you, and to what absurd conclusions you would come at last. You are welcome to your creed —it is that of a cynic, who would sneer at all the holiest affections of the heart I will not stop to argue the question with you, for, as sure as we now breathe the air of heaven, the day is coming when, in sorrow and bitterness of heart, you will curse the hour you learned thus to slander a woman, and outrage human feeling. No such thing as love! Look from the window where you sit, and see that woman leading yonder blind man through the streets. They are both cleanly clad, though their garments are so patched that you cannot recognize the color or character of the original material. Mark how tenderly she supports him as he descends the curb-stone—see with what care she guides his footsteps through the throng. What has induced her to forego the comforts she might earn for herself in order to be the willing slave of that old blind beggar? Love—ay! that love which you despise. And that same feeling, still burning as brightly in her bosom as when forty years ago she promised to be a true and faithful wife to the then stalwart man at her side, will continue to irradiate his path until one or both have reached that bourne where, in the comforting language of the Scripture, the weary are at rest/ Look at the smile on the sightless countenance of the man, as he turns to his companion, and then deny, if you can, the power of love. I tell you, Thurston, that this blind beggar, poor and despised as he may seem, would not surrender the priceless jewel of his companion's love, for all your wealth and talents and many advantages." And with these words, spoken in a somewhat indignant tone, he left the room.

Time passed on. Thurston, carrying out his idea of love, became known in the world as a skeptic in the heart's purest affection, and though his wit always secured him a certain eclat , he now came to be regarded with that suspicion and distrust which inevitably attends the one who sneers at human feeling. He had few friends, though many acquaintances. He became that absurd thing a diner out, and was to be found at every convivial party, the utterer of stale jests and worn out anecdotes. Left an orphan at an early

age, he had no family to whom to look for sympathy; and so his feelings grew daily more and more blunted, and the links of brotherhood which bound his heart to the human race, snapped one by one. Selfishness at length grew to be his prevailing characteristic.

When twenty years had passed from the date of his conversation with Burton, Thurston was grown querulous and cynical. He still kept up his bachelor establishment, but his youth was fading, and with age came sickness and neglect. His wealth still retained for him a certain degree of respect, but his wit had now

degenerated into a habit of constant sneering, which drove every body but his own servants from his presence.

Now mark the difference. Burton, at the period of the above conversation, was already engaged to a very estimable lady, and this indeed may have induced him to repel, with such peculiar warmth of manner, the sophistry of his former classmate. - The two young men often met afterward, and indeed still continued to be friends, but their wide difference of opinion on so important a subject, forbade any thing like confidence. Gradually circumstances widened the almost imperceptible breach, and when Burton married, the acquaintance of the two classmates had little more in it than the name. Neither of the young couple were wealthy, but Burton was a rising member in his profession, and his bride was sufficiently dowered to furnish her house handsomely, though not luxuriously. Their residence was in a quiet street where they could command a certain portion of elegance without extravagance. They were supremely happy.

All this, however, did not prevent Thurston from exercising his wit on what he called "the death and burial" of his old friend. That Burton should have married an almost portionless girl whom he loved, when he might have obtained more than one heiress whom he did not love, was quoted by Thurston as an evidence of the highest folly, of a supreme ignorance of his

own interests.

" He could have liked the heiress, if he had made up his mind to it, just as well as he likes this Miss Bowlbey, whose whole fortune, all told, doesn't exceed three thousand dollars. Pshaw! the fellow's a fool—and then besides," he exclaimed, with a shrug of the shoulders, " we 've lost a boon companion. I'll get Tom the poet here to write an epitaph. Push the wine, lads."

Mingling in such different spheres, the two classmates eventually almost lost sight of each other, and only met occasionally in the streets, when a-bow formed the extent of the recognition.

Meantime Burton prospered in his profession, and rose slowly, though steadily to the front rank. This, it is true, was the work of years; but the toil of those years was sweetened by the sympathy of an affectionate wife, and the playful caresses of his children. Each year his heart grew more expanded, and his brotherhood to all men increased; for wedded love not only deepens an affection for one particular object, but widens the sympathy of the heart for others. With the increase of his income, Burton was enabled to command more of the luxuries of life; and finally he purchased and occupied one of the finest houses, in the 'most fashionable quarter of the city. His name became one of repute, and his influence in the city was felt by all. He was at the head of many of the philanthropic institutions of the day, and was active in all. His children grew up around him, a family of lovely daughters, and talented and upright sons; and at forty-five no man in his native town perhaps enjoyed such uninterrupted felicity. Sickness and sorrow had fallen lightly on his household; and the partner of his life seemed still, to his eyes, as beautiful as on the morning when she became his bride.

And what was the fate of Thurston? A moment we will return to him, ere we dismiss him forever. Grown old and querulous; deserted by his former

friends; and neglected in sickness by his own servants, he lingered on for months, tortured by disease, and stung by the reflection that his wealth would go to persons who felt for him no affection. He died alone in his bed; and ere his body was cold his nurse had pilfered his most valuable jewels and disappeared.

■

105

THE FATAL NUPTIALS.

By M. DAVENPORT.

Roza si, a young man of Sicily, remarkable for his accomplishments and his beauty, had won for himself the hand of Leonora, a rich heiress, when she had reached her eighteenth year. Rizzari, happy in his love, was unfortunate in having for his rival a noble Corsican; and the Corsicans, like to the Silicians, have ever distinguished themselves by their vengeance for a supposed affront.

The marriage of the brave Rizzari and the lovely Leonora, took place in the chapel of the small village of Bruca. The ceremony had reached that point where the bridegroom was about to place upon the finger of his beloved the small, plain, round ring, emblematic of the eternity of their love, and the simplicity of their tastes, when there was heard in the chapel a frightful demoniac laugh. It was so shrill, so piercing, and so horrible t that it was heard thrilling above the peals of the organ, and drowning, as it were, the joyous choir that was bursting forth in a heavenly hymn-like song. The sounds were those that might be supposed to come from hell, rather than the echo of a human voice. So extraordinary a circumstance naturally attracted the attention of qll; but to the great astonishment of those

present, it was impossible to guess from whom, or whence that awful, terrifying laugh of derision had proceeded.

The marriage ceremony was continued, and this extraordinary interruption was soon forgotten amid the imposing solemnities of the magnificent nuptials.

All the apartments of the castle of Bruca, excepting one—the nuptial chamber—were that day opened to the hundreds of guests which were invited. At sunset the castle was brilliantly illuminated, and the marriage feast was succeeded by dances, which took place in the splendid halls of that ducal palace.

Leonora was most happy; for she was proud of the husband she had chosen, and she did not even pretend to conceal the joy that she felt in being the wife of Rizzari. Happiness sparkled in his eyes, and their rays cast gleams of pleasure upon all who looked on them.

It was in the midst of the ball, and at the very time when the happiness of all was complete, that there was perceived entering into the grand banquet-room two persons that were masked, and that wore the habiliments of peasants; these two persons bore with them garlands of flowers, and executed dances with such extraordinary grace, and such astonishing agility, that they soon attracted universal regard and admiration to themselves. It was speedily discovered that they were unknown to all present, and various persons asked them therefore to declare their names. They let it be known by signs that their desire, was to unmask themselves but to the bridegroom alone, and to preserve their incognito to every one else. They soon afterwards retired, followed by Rizzari.

The exquisite music of a perfect orchestra gave out the signal for fresh dances and renewed pleasure. The absence of the bridegroom was scarcely remarked. Leonora alone sought for him with her looks, and she alone

appeared troubled that he should be, even for a few moments, from her sight.

Twenty minutes had scarcely elapsed, when the two masks were again entering the ball-room; but their costume had in the meanwhile been changed; they now wore mourning robes, and they carried a third person along with them, who was enveloped in long white garments. They advanced with slow and measured paces into the very centre of the festive party.

This dreadful apparition, at a moment of joyous feasting, excited a very unpleasant sensation among the guests; but then no one felt himself authorised to interfere with that which was supposed to be sanctioned by the giver of the feast himself. When the two individuals, who were masked, reached the middle of the ball-room they laid down the burden, and then began dances that were at the same time melancholy and grotesque.

Leonora, agitated at length by the continued absence of her husband, could scarcely think of giving a moment's thought to the funeral-like scene before her. At last a secret anxiety—a dread that she could not explain—took possession of her, and she asked, as she trembled with fear, for her spouse.

At that very instant the masks had finished their terrible pantomime. They advanced towards her, and one of them, catching her by her nuptial robe, said in a tone of voice sufficiently loud to be heard by several others, "*Venite a piangere le nostre e le vostre miserie*"—"Come and weep for your own grief as well as ours.

At these words Leonora fell fainting into the arms of her sister-in-law. A confused clamor arose among the guests; they supposed that the two masks had offered some insult to the bride; but the strangers had disappeared before their suspicions assumed the form of certainty.

It was now remarked, and with some surprise, that the individual stretched upon the earth, continued still to play, as if it were real, the part of a dead man. He moved not a muscle, and there seemed to be not a single respiration to move the long sepulchral garment with which he was concealed. Curiosity induced one of the guests to raise the arm of this person; it fell heavily back to his side, and the hand itself was icy cold. An awful presentiment of horror took possession of the minds of all. Hurriedly they uncovered the face of the person lying before them. Oh, heavens! it was a corpse! It was the dead body of the Count Rizzari!

Who could depict the frightful scene that then took place in the castle of Bruca? Trouble and confusion were amid all the guests. Everywhere were to be heard horrid exclamations of surprise and cries of horror. Here were to be found men drawing their swords, and crying for vengeance; and there women overcome with terror fainting or flying in different directions.

Leonora had not come to her senses; and she knew not yet the full extent of her misery, when the corpse had been removed, and borne into the nuptial chamber.

It was there that the crime had been committed. The disordered state of the furniture showed that a frightful struggle had taken place. The instruments of assassination lay upon the floor, and on the nuptial couch was found a branch of cypress, the type of the premeditated vengeance that had been but too fatally accomplished.

All pursuit after the assassins proved vain. No trace could be discovered of the authors of this atrocious crime. One person was suspected; but it was known that he quitted Sicily, and never again returned to it.

As to Leonora, the happy bride for a few hours, she never recovered from the shock she had received; she retired to a convent, where death, the best and truest friend of the unhappy, soon put an end to her misfortunes.



106.

THE CASTILIAN MAID.

TALE OF THE PENINSULA.

By H. BOWLES.

" I tell thee, Francois, that Castilian maid, Donna Isandra, is a most magnificent creation: such queen-like majesty in her gait—such brilliancy in the dark languish of her liquid eye—such rapturous melody in the tones of her sweet voice, like the soft murmurings of some gentle stream in summer's noontide sleep. I was presented to her, the other evening at the ball given by Don Julien Sansbez, in honor of the Emperor and that old fool, Charles IV., ci-devant of Spain; and have written it upon the tablet of my memory, among my most strenuous resolutions, that mine she shall be, in spite of the old Don, her father, and that peach-colored Englishman, to whom I understand she is betrothed—indeed, were I not assured such is the fact, I should have easily guessed it without any very great stretch of imagination, for there seemed to be some chemical affinity between their eyes, as not all the tortuous windings of the minuet could prevent the interchange of most eloquent glances during the whole of the evening. I don't mean to say I am, or could be in love with the girl; but you know, Francois, one requires some such pretty toy to wile away the leisure hours after the fatigues of a campaign. Therefore, mon enfant , set the component parts of thy sapient cranium into thinking condition, and resolve me how this is to be effected."

These words were addressed by Adolphe Count St. Croix to his valet, Francois Perier, as he was assisting him in the operations of his toilet St.

Croix was a colonel in the second regiment of Chasseurs in the French army, which occupied Spain early in the spring of 1808, a division of which was then quartered at Bayonne, in attendance upon Napoleon.

"Ah, Monsieur!" returned the valet de chambre, "such language is treason to la belle France. Ma fois! to prefer a Spanish brunette to her lovely daughters! Only for one moment compare the vivacity of spirits, the elasticity of gait, the symmetry of form of our own Abadan grisette, with the pompous utterance, perpendicular grandeur, and peacock walk of the Castilian—in fact, strutting along like" (the volubility of the servitor had far outstripped the sturdy procession of his ideas, and he looked round the room for an illustration, at length having found one he resumed)—"like a pair of tongues in a marshal's boots. If Monsieur does seek a companion for his hours of enjoyment, first and before all, she ought to be a native of the grand nation, born in or as near as possible to our Alsace; the color of her eye should be a bright hazel; her locks light and lustrous"—the valet-de-chambre here became fearfully poetic—"her cheeks dimpled with a sweet smile, and her neck white as an alabaster vase; enfin, the very counterpart of my Louise."

"Which," interposed the Count laughing, "is the very abstraction of perfection."

"Not all perfection, noble Colonel," resumed François; "for, seeing that I am ever imperfect"—'t was the first time the valet had ever been known to speak disparagingly of himself or his proportions. "Were she perfect, her perfections and my imperfections"—the rascal's face belied his words—"would be continually at variance; but she has just so many faults--nor ought they to be denominated faults—say, rather, noble Count, failings—nor yet failings, slight and venial peccadilloes—or, as our Abby used to describe them, evanescent shadows upon the mirrored purity of the virgin mind, which only serve to bring their virtues into stronger relief."

"Be it so, then," said St Croix, growing impatient at the recital of a panegyric upon the female excellencies of Francois' mistress, which he had already listened to more than a thousand and one times. "Be ready to act promptly upon my orders this evening, of whatever nature they may happen to be, both as to time and place." The valet bowed a respectful assent to his master's instructions.

On the evening of the day upon which the above conversation took place, Raymond de Belvoir and the Lady Isandra were observed to promenade, as usual, upon the shores of the A dour, following the course of the river toward the estuary. It wanted yet one hour of sunset, and glorious was the picture which every thing above and around presented. A dreamy stillness—the lull and hush of life pervaded the atmosphere. Toward the Spanish frontiers the shades of night were descending upon the tops of the Pyrenees, deepening the gloom of the mountain vistas, whilst in the far west a flood of carmine was poured upon the waves, as the glowing orb of life stole from the blood-red arch amidst the rapture of creation; earth and sky seeming to embrace in a transport of voluptuous light, as the conqueror sunk to his rest like a warrior upon the battle-field, and the sparkling bay resounded with the shout of waves that upraised themselves to kiss, as it were, the skirts of the receding God. Then all again was still; the glowing air stirred faintly as a pulse, and day died like the echoes of a song. Next came the soft witchery of twilight, the Sabbath hour of the day, and the stars one by one lit up their bivouac fires in the dome of the world's temple, whilst "the panting of its great heart" grew hush, that the vesper song of praise might ascend to Him who had worded all into the immensity of space.

As in woe there is a stupefaction, which causes the unhappy to sleep when exhausted by affliction, so in the mystic union of fond hearts, there is a depth and holiness of feeling, of which silence is the best and only interpreter. Then do the startling sigh and trickling tear, the dumb eloquence of the heart, declare more truly the intensity of love than the wildest and most impassioned accents of endearment. And thus it was with Raymond

and Isandra—each wished to speak, yet knew not how to break the spell that choked their utterance.

At last Isandra dissolved the charm as she observed in a low and melancholy tone, " I know not why it is, yet so it is, dearest Raymond, a feeling of sadness steals upon me now in my happiest moments. That parting sun ever recalls the image of my own dear land, upon the limits of whose empire they say of old he flung his orient and his setting beams; but now, torn by intestine commotion and foreign invasion, its borders are daily contracting, till at last it will dwindle to a span, a speck upon the world's disc, without a name."

"Dearest idol of my heart," replied De Beauvoir, " why give way to such despondency? That sun sleeps but to rise again refreshed in glory and light; and so shall it be with your own Spain. Nations, like individuals, have their vicissitudes; or, if it be that Heaven, in its wisdom, has decreed that the sword shall desolate its plains, then let my island home be your adopted country—England, the land of the brave and free—her coasts are iron bound, but the hearts of her sons are warm. Castile shall then be ever present to your view, for love shall make all England Castile to you. Rather is this melancholy the inseparable companion of adoring hearts. In the sunniest hour of the noon a sense of stillness and solitude will pervade the landscape; so in love, 'tis the gloom and shadow of uncertainty which fosters that sweet perplexity upon which it lives."

"Yet do my fears," rejoined the lady, "begin to assume something more of substance than before. 'T is scarce a fortnight since the Count St. Croix and I have been made acquainted, and during the period he has never ceased to tease me with his importunities, but after so insulting a fashion, as if it were a condescension on his part to notice me. Three times have I observed him dogging our evening walk; fearing, however, some very unpleasant rencontre, I hesitated to apprise you of it; but now, dearest Raymond, my fears for your personal safety have overcome my discretion, and I speak to

warn you in time. Yet be not rash—if not for yourself, yet on my account What would be this dreary world without thee—years of cold and blank existence, bringing, in their rotation, but one chilling sense, that come what may to others, all must be dark and desolate to me; and that one heart, the possession of which would have made an Eden of my days, is gone and gone for ever."

" Miscreant! hath he dared to pollute your ears with his ribald tongue!" cried De Beauvoir, no longer able to restrain his indignation. "By the God that called him and me into existence, he shall rue it with his heart's dearest blood!"

" Blaspheme not, Raymond," interposed the Castilian maid. " Is this your discretion? He is subtle and malignant, as well as brave, and will seek such unfair vantage as your generous and noble nature would disdain ; therefore you are not equally matched, and as you value my happiness, do nothing rashly. Providence is ever upon the watch to counteract the machinations of the wicked, and He will be our shield against impending evil. Besides, were you to insult the French Count publicly, not all the influence of the Marshal, though exerted under a deep sense of the debt of gratitude, which he owes you for having saved his life, will be sufficient to ensure your liberty, should the matter reach the Emperor Napoleon's ears."

They had now reached a point upon the beach where the cliffs, shelving to the water's edge, impeded further progress; and as they turned to retrace their steps, their attention was arrested by a loud whistle which echoed from the rocks, and was replied to by the crew of a boat, which they had watched for some time as it dropped down with the current of the stream, apparently engaged in fishing. At this instant a ball whizzed by the ear of Raymond de Beauvoir, and as he looked in the direction whence the report proceeded, he saw the Count de Croix emerge from a cavern in the rocks, and wave his hand to the boat, which was rapidly approaching the shore.

Judging from the signal that they were acting in concert, and feeling convinced that their villainous design was to despatch himself, and then carry off Isandra, before he should be overpowered by the number of his assailants, he advanced hastily upon the Frenchman, as yet unsupported, who, having discharged a second pistol, but with no better effect than the first, was in the act of drawing his sword, when he sprung upon him with the fury of a tiger, and with one blow felled him to the earth. Then wresting the sword from the hand of his prostrate foe, and pointing it toward his heart, he shouted to his assailants, who were at first inclined to attempt a rescue, that if they approached two yards nearer either himself or the lady, he would bury it to the hilt in the Count's body. His words produced the required effect, for, after a short parley with each other, the accomplices retreated to the boat, partly intimidated by the determined attitude of their single antagonist, but chiefly influenced by the consideration, that though they should succeed in their design, after surmounting the only obstacle in their way, still they would gain no possible advantage, as their employer would not be in existence to pay the stipulated remuneration.

Raymond's eye followed them till they gained the opposite shore, and then looking down sternly, but contemptuously, upon the fallen Count, he exclaimed, "before next you practice kidnapping take another lesson from your Emperor, sir knight of the thieving fraternity. Justly should your life pay the forfeit of your villainy, were it not that I deem it a degradation that a sword wielded by my arm should be stained with the blood of so vile a reptile. Crawl out the miserable span of your abject existence 'till stung to death by some viper as poisoned as yourself."

So saying, he spurned him from his presence with his foot, and rejoined the lady. The Count watched them as they retraced their steps to Bayonne, but did not dare to attempt further molestation that evening, particularly as his adversary had carried off his sword and pistols as a trophy of his victory, and then in a frenzy of rage and conscious degradation, he swore to be avenged when opportunity presented itself.

The scene now changes to Saragossa, whither Isandra and her father, the Marquis Torrijos, accompanied by Raymond de Beauvoir, had repaired some days after the occurrences just related. All was uproar and confusion upon their arrival. Tidings had reached the city that the French army under Mortier, was advancing a second time to besiege it, and Palafox, the heroic governor, aided by the noble enthusiasm of its inhabitants, who had sworn to die in the trenches rather than surrender, was preparing to receive them in the best way the miserable fortifications of the place supplied. The foreigners who remained in the city, stimulated by the same noble feelings, formed themselves into a volunteer corps under the command of our hero. Even the gentler portion of the community, among whom were many ladies of distinction, displayed the same patriotic ardor, and were distributed into companies, whose duty it was to supply provisions and ammunition to the several quarters of the town, and attend upon the wounded.

Saragossa is situated in the valley of the Ebro, on the right bank of that river, with a suburb on the left connected with it by a stone bridge. Far as the eye can reach, the country is beautifully diversified with groves of olive trees, and evergreen oaks, and overlooking the city, about the distance of half a league, is the elevated ground of the Torrero, containing a convent, and some other buildings of inferior note. The wall, which surrounded the town had been originally constructed merely as a barrier to facilitate the collection of the taxes, imposed upon the sale of every article brought to the markets, was divided by nine gates, the connexion between which was preserved in some places by a mud rampart, in others by the remains of old Moorish fortifications, which had a slight parapet, but no platform for musquetry.

As the particulars of this ever memorable siege are so well known, we omit the details of it previous to the morning of the 26th of June, when the French having made themselves masters of the suburbs, inundated the country opposite the Arrabat, to prevent a sortie of the garrison, and

supported by a furious cannonade from twentyfour and thirty-six pounders, and accompanied by a perfect storm of shot and shell, attacked and carried the bridge called the Huerba; from whence the Arron-gese, overwhelmed by superior numbers, fell back, and were pursued by the victors to the Monastery of the Augustines, or Los Monichas. The assault upon the monastery then commenced, and though the carnage among the enemy was dreadful, they still continued to advance. The combatants then entered the church, from which the French were at first repulsed by the monks, who, mingling in the thickest of the affray, fought with all the fury and fervor of desperation. The assailants returned again to the charge, and now the chancel presented a scene such as has seldom or never been witnessed before.

At the great and side altars were crowds of women and children upon their knees, supplicating Heaven for mercy and protection; but their frantic cries were drowned amidst the yells and execrations of the belligerents, and the roar of the musquetry. The French troops, amidst an indiscriminate slaughter of women and children, still pushed forward, till their further progress was arrested by the cry that the roof, battered by shells, was beginning to give way. Panic stricken by this new enemy; mingling in one common mass with those against whom, but a moment before, they had been engaged in deadly conflict, they rushed for the doors. Some precipitated themselves from the windows, such was their extreme terror; whilst the most heartrending screams re-echoed throughout the church, from the numbers that were crushed beneath the feet of the fugitives, eg suffocated by the pressure at the doors.

Of the dense crowd that had previously filled the chapel, except the wounded, but two remained; one a lady, who knelt before a picture of the Madonna, and the other was the Count St Croix, who had headed the troops in the assault upon the Monastery. The Count, believing the cry of the falling roof to be a false alarm, forbore for a while to join his companions in arms, curious to inspect the features of one who had displayed so much of calm

intrepidity, amidst the scene of horrors which had just been enacted.

The devotee still preserved the same attitude as if no other object occupied her mind, except the holy office in which she was engaged. At length, the unusual stillness of the church, interrupted only at intervals by the hollow groans of the wounded, seemed to fix his attention. At the noise of the Count's footsteps, as he advanced toward her, she turned her face in the direction, and one glance at the well-known features told him they were those of the Lady Isandra. She had snatched a few moments from the arduous, but humane duty of attending to the wounded, to pour out at the shrine of the Virgin Mother her tears and prayers for the liberation of her native land. Her eye fell darkly, and a pang shot through her frame, as she recognised the hated form of the intruder. She looked above, around—no avenue for escape presented itself. One minute more, and the Count had seized her hand, as if anticipating her purpose, shouting at the same time in a tone of exultation, "blessed triumph of our arms! this moment of our unexpected meeting repays for all the toil and turmoil of this bloody day! Demon, or fate, be it which you will, I will curse thee no more for marring my projects." Then, his voice sunk to a low but startling and sepulchral tone. "You have scorned my advances, and escaped my vengeance once, proud maiden; but now, though hell itself yawned beneath, you shall not balk my passion. Swear by that shrine before which you kneel—this favor do I grant thee for thy resemblance to one whom I loved and lost—or rather swear—you will respect the oath—to be my wedded bride, spite of precontract or bethrothing, by him who is the god of your idolatry, to be mine, and mine for ever, or this blazing fabric—" and his eye glanced upward as the flames burst from the crackling timbers of the roof—"shall be a holocaust to light your soul to the chambers of eternal Bleep!"

"Presumptuous man!" returned Isandra, all the native fire of the Castilian flashing from her eye as she spoke, "I swear not at all, willingly; or, if I do, I swear by that Mighty One who spoke that shrine, and this whirling world into existence, peopling it with the miserable atoms of the human race,

never shall you call me thine." Then her voice dropped to the softest notes of entreaty, as she added, " has all that is akin to woman in man's breast departed from you? or is the stream of pity so frozen by this icy blast of war, that not one tender feeling floats along the life stream of your existence] Why should you break the chain that binds two devoted hearts together? Hast thou no mother, no sister] Oh.! if such there be, even they would plead for me in this hour of trial."

She seemed by her last words to awaken somewhat of softer emotion in the Frenchman's heart; but the effect was momentary. More horrible and ghastly still was the grin that pervaded his features as he replied, his whole frame quivering with internal passion: " Mother! sister! once you were the loved accents of my lips. A mother's voice, in times gone by, was to me-as the summer's breeze to the houseless wanderer, cooling the fever of my boyish fretfulness; her eye, beaming with maternal light, was the cynosure of my destiny. And, sister—sweet sister! even still my mocking fancy echoes in my ears thy dulcet tones, like music's dying close!"

He dashed from his cheeks the scalding tear, that showed that nature will at times assert her sway in the most obdurate heart, and then he gnashed his teeth with wild ferocity, as he cried in hurried sentences, " but the savage German came, like some fabled monster, blasting desolation from his nostrils. In one night our house was a blazing funeral pile; and, kneeling beside the smouldering remains of my mother and sister, I swore to be revenged upon the whole human race. From that hour my very being changed; the current of life was driven back upon its source; my whole mind became but one thought, and that thought was blood. Hatred—dark unmitigated hatred to my fellow mortals—took possession of my breast, and in the reign of terror the guillotine was the plaything of my pastime, and the shrieks and groans of the dying, the music of the banquet I dragged the aged noble, and the tottering priest by their grey locks to execution; and as the infant clung to my knees for mercy, I flung them to the cold arms of their headless parent 'T is not those in whose being Nature plants the seeds of

cruelty that produce the ripest fruit Satiety will pall their keenest thirst for slaughter. But should a generous nature once be estranged by havoc brought home to itself, the spirit is then baptised in blood, and becomes regenerate in malignity. What was Robespierre? So gentle at the first that he could not crush the vile worm that crossed his path. What did he become? Chief butcher upon a human shambles. So it is with me. Therefore, maiden, no more trifling. Be mine, or—"

" In mercy spare!" shrieked Isandra as she dropped upon her knees. " Fear you no God, no judgment, no future? "

"I believe in no God," returned the Frenchman wildly, " but the God that rules within me—the eternal principle of .vengeance; no judgment, but the judgment which they who survive shall carve upon the ancestral tomb; no future, but the deathless name won upon the tented field, if haply I can win a name; a mortal immortality, like to that of the eternal Emperor. Once again, then, swear."

" No, by the souls of my countrymen, who have shed their hearts' best blood in defence of their native soil," cried the Castilian maid, as she started to her feet from the suppliant posture. " Never shall these lips be pressed by the murderer of his country's peace. Monster of iniquity ! I have humbled myself to clasp those bloodstained knees, not to beg for life, but that which is dearer than life itself. Craven wretch! is this the deathless name Upon the tented field? a victory over one weak woman? Raymond, Raymond, where art thou !"

" Hah!" shouted St Croix, " call you upon the scurvy Islander for protection! If I lacked a stimulant to nerve me for my purpose, it were the mention of that accursed name. Then be thy desire accomplished."

He seized her by the hair as she endeavored to escape from his grasp, her beauteous locks floating in wild disorder as she fell senseless before the

picture of the Madonna; a heavenly radiance then suffused her countenance, slowly and softly, as slumber steals upon the tired infant Her head dropped upon her neck, as the lily droops before the bursting shower. In his hand St Croix grasped his dagger, as with his left he strained back her head to give full effect to the blow. Then his voice echoed through the vaulted church, as he shouted in a tone of savage exultation, "another victim to the manes of my mother and sister! Insect of that island speck upon the ocean, would you were a witness to the triumph of this hour! Aye, this gushing tide of the young heart's warmest blood shall wash clean as the driven snow the stain upon my honor. Lick the dust from the feet of this stark and ghastly corpse! Clasp this cold statue, and warm it, if you can, into life, health and beauty. Print soft kisses upon that livid face, and let them scorch upon your lips the burning fervor of the heart" Then he paused awhile to take in a full perception of his fiendish triumph, and dragged the body of Isandra from the steps of the shrine to the pavement beneath a gothic arch, which divided the centre aisle from the lateral chapel. At times the church was buried in profound darkness, and then the flames burst forth anew, and by their intense brilliancy threw into bold relief the monuments and pictures which adorned the walls.

Again all was gloom, and the assassin deferred the blow till the next gleam of light should point where to strike. Already had he raised his arm, and in one short moment the glittering steel would have revelled in her heart's best blood, when down came the roof of the centre aisle, shattered by a shell, burying the ruffian and his dagger in the ruins.

Isandra, protected by the projection of the arch, sustained no injury beyond a few bruises from the rubbish. Still she lay senseless and bleeding upon the floor, and in all probability would have been choked by the dense vapor of smoke and charcoal which filled the atmosphere, had she not been perceived by a man in the garb of a monk, who just then stole from his hiding-place behind the altar. He first cautiously surveyed the scene around, and then feeling satisfied that the enemy had withdrawn, he approached

and raised her from her recumbent position, supporting her head upon his knee; then he looked into her pale face, pulled down her leaden eyelids, placed his hand upon her breast, but there was no sign of life there. He next sprinkled her face, neck and hands with water from the font, and listened to catch the returning throb of animation; but the pendulum of life was still motionless. He then chafed her temples and breathed into her mouth. At last a dewy damp oozed from the pores of her forehead ; her heart began to flutter weakly like the waving of an insect's wing, and a sigh scarce one degree removed from silence, convinced the holy man that she still lived. Finding that animation was returning, the monk folded her cautiously in his arms, and carried her in safety through some bye streets to a house in the Corso. But few of the sacred community escaped the destruction of their temple. Unit after unit went down before the fury of the French soldiers to complete the score in death's arithmetic, till of the holy group that chaunted the matin hymn, not enough remained to weep a requiem to the souls of their departed brethren.

Leaving the smoking ruins of the monastery of the AuguAtines, the French troops still pushed forward across the botanic gardens, through the Plaza to the square called the Corso—the sappers and miners blowing the bouses from their very foundations.

Night had now closed in, but still the city was kept in twilight darkness by the red glare of the artillery vomiting from its mouth a liquid stream of fire, so continuous was the discharge. The deep low notes of the cannon's universal roar, and the clash of arms, and the neigh and tramp of steeds, with shrieks and groans of the wounded closing the diapason of battle's overture, occasioned a din as deafening as if the very elements themselves were collapsing into chaos. The air, surcharged with a vapor of smoke, sulphur, and putridity from the unburied dead, seemed to pant like a thing of life. At length the conibatants on both sides paused at the entrance to the Corso to take breath, and then the full desolation of the scene broke upon

their senses.

There is a stupefaction in the midst of the fight, which renders the sensibilities of our nature dead to surrounding horrors; but should a momentary check ensue, the vision of reality rises in clear perception, and man's better principle revolts from the devastation, which his headlong passion has caused. So it was in that pause of the bloody vortex; the French opened their ranks as the women and children rushed toward their defenders with outstretched arms. As each case of individual suffering presented itself, a cry of horror burst from the sympathising spectators. One mother hurried past; the pupil of the eye was glassed and rigid. It seemed as if terror had frozen up the fountain of her tears. Her wild locks waved in the breeze, and then settled in sanguinary collapse upon the dead infant she carried in her bosom.

Another followed, and there was a dreary abstraction in her look, as though she essayed to call some image to her mind and could not. Then she appeared to gaze upon something that was palpable to her view alone, and next her eye fell upon a bundle which she carried in her hand, and she shuddered at the sight.

Last, before the columns closed their ranks, a third rushed by, and she laughed; but each burst terminated in a scream so long and piercing, that the listeners stopped their ears with their hands, and the boldest spirits preferred the wildest shout of the battle-field to the thrilling cadence of her maniac notes. She, too, carried something; the light from a burning house showed that it was a portrait. One looked in the face of the bearer, and he said it was the Countess Benita, who had gone mad on hearing that her daughter was shot by the French.

We left the Count St Croix among the ruins of the Church of the Augustines more stunned than injured by the fall of the roof. Consciousness, however, soon returned, and raising himself upon his knees he felt about with his

hands for Isandra, to discover if she was yet alive. At length they rested on the cold features of a woman, whose remaining strength had just sufficed to support her to the steps of the altar, where she had breathed her last, whilst he lay in a state of insensibility. Concluding that she was dead, he groped his way in the darkness, stumbling over a confused mass of dead bodies and rubbish, until at length, he effected his exit from the church through the door of the north transept. He then crossed the monks' burying-ground, to the entrance of a street which was at right angles with the great line leading to the Corso, meeting only a few miserable wounded wretches, upon whose features famine and death were graven in deep furrows, dragging themselves along, whilst the breath of life still lingered upon their lips, either to enjoy the poor consolation of resting in death upon consecrated ground; or perhaps, urged by some cannibal instinct to satisfy the inordinate cravings of hunger with unnatural food, when no hand was near to offer bread. Not daring to keep the open street, lest he might come in contact with such of the inhabitants as still concealed themselves within the ruins of their houses, the French Count, aided by the clear light of the moon, which now sailed from behind the clouds, that had hitherto obscured her brilliancy, still continued his progress along a narrow bye street, at the termination of which he entered a spacious court-yard, one side of which was occupied by the buildings of a large mansion, apparently the residence of some Spanish grandee. The entrance to the lofty hall within was unobstructed, the door having been forced from its hinges, and the fragments of magnificent furniture, antique statuary, and broken vases, which were scattered upon the pavement, sprinkled here and there with dark spots, plainly showed that after a most sanguinary conflict the house had been attacked and taken by the besieging army, but for some cause abandoned with such precipitation, that heaps of valuable property still remained unremoved.

Prompted by curiosity to see the more elaborate decorations of this noble fabric, the Count, after surveying the baronial relics of by-gone grandeur, which adorned the walls of the great hall, ascended the staircase, and

passed through the reception room into the presence chamber.

Melancholy was the picture which this once superb apartment presented. The ancestral tapestry, torn by rude hands, hung in shreds from the walls; and the pictures, among which were some of the finest specimens from the pencils of Murillo and Velasquez, were pierced with bullet holes, whilst the full ruin of the magnificence which they had formerly depicted, was reflected from a thousand fragments of broken mirrors scattered upon the floor.

An air of solemn silence pervaded the scene, broken at intervals by the wind, which swept across the strings of a harp, which stood in the deep recess of a window. It seemed as though some unseen hand, so wild and wailing were the notes, struck the chords of a funeral dirge to departed greatness. Never does desolation appear so truly desolate, as when robed in the remains of primeval splendor. A sensation of soil, sweet tranquillity will steal upon the mind as we tread the flowers of the church-yard grave, and death in its simple winding-sheet appears the slumber of a tired spirit; but when we gaze upon the velvet pall, and gilded coffin of the ancestral tomb, our feelings are those of awe and gloom, and the cold tenant of the mausoleum seems as though he would start into life from a troubled dream.

Such was the state of mind of the Count St. Croix, as with folded arms he mused upon the monument of human mutability then before him. The vision of his past existence rose in clear perception. The artless innocence of childhood, when he wept himself to sleep in his mother's arms; the glowing fervor of his boyish days, when his romantic fancy revelled in a sunny dream of ideality; and then he shuddered, as memory, opening the records of by-gone deeds, disclosed the page of guilty manhood, written in characters of blood.

An undefined sensation, a presentiment of coming evil took possession of his soul, when a hollow moan, which seemed to come from an inner

chamber, opening upon the one in which he stood, startled him from his reverie. He listened in painful suspense. Was it the vibration of the harp strings or the unearthly whisper from some herald spirit, sent to announce approaching dissolution? Again it struck upon his affrighted ears with appalling distinctness. His eyes rolled in the frenzy of desperation; his heart beat as though it would burst from its casement; a cold perspiration suffused his frame, as in a paroxysm of supernatural terror wrought to madness, crying in a frenzied voice, "be you spirit of the damned, or mortal man, I'll meet you," with a bound, he dashed into the chamber from whence the sounds had proceeded; and, as he entered, the moonbeams streaming full upon her face, revealed the pale features of the Castilian Maid to his astonished gaze. The Monk fearing to fall in with a party of the French army, had conveyed her to her present place of concealment, supposing that, as the house had been already plundered, she would be secure from further molestation ; whilst, at her earnest desire, he left her to learn tidings of her father and Raymond de Beauvoir, and to assure them of her safety; some hours having elapsed since she last visited them at the gate Tordillo, where they had continued with their gallant band since the morning, to maintain their position against all the efforts of the besiegers.

After the departure of her protector she had thrown herself upon a broken couch to recruit her exhausted frame by a few moments of repose, when her slumbers were unseasonably interrupted by the abrupt entrance of the Count. She started to her feet on hearing the noise. They looked for awhile in silence upon each other; and as she averted her eyes from the hated object, St. Croix, assured of the groundlessness of his supernatural fears, exclaimed, "this then is no phantom from the dead, but flesh and blood like myself. Fool that I was to suffer myself to be affected by the dreams of an excited imagination! Fortune, thou art still my friend! Bright destiny, that brings to my longing arms, when I least expected it, my heart's dearest treasure. Lady of my love, I had mourned for you as one that had met an untimely death beneath the ruins of the church. And yet, idiot that I was, I should have known so much loveliness was not made for the tomb."

" Would that the cold tomb did cover this worthless clay," returned Isandra in a weak and faltering tone, " rather than I should again behold my relentless persecutor."

" It could not be, my pensive charmer," resumed the Count; " you could not die; the dark languish of those liquid eyes would wake such pity in the grim monarch's breast, that for very fascination he could not dim their lustre. Those ruby lips," continued the Count in a libertine tone; "that snow-white bust; those graceful limbs, cast in nature's fairest mould, were formed for life and love.' And yet, when I look again, methinks you must have died and risen again, new-born in beauty, such increased loveliness is there in the voluptuous languor of those dark eyes. Fair Saint, forgive my presumption, if I spoke when I should have worshipped. Thus on my bended knees" (he suited the action to the word) " do I kneel in adoration of thy angel self, and print with soft kisses upon this seraph hand the image of my burning heart!"

She endeavored to snatch her hand from his insolent grasp; but he still maintained his hold as he continued in the same loose strain—" nay then, fair Saint, refuse not the homage of a devoted heart!"

"Presumptuous reptile!" exclaimed the indignant maid, endeavoring to extricate herself from his embrace; " was it not enough to escape Heaven's vengeance once, but you must tempt its wrath a second time!"

"Nay," rejoined the Count, "I dread no wrath of earth or heaven. Your loved presence is my heaven, and your matchless self is my divinity; and, for the punishment which you will impose upon my presumption, so will be the penance, that I shall sin again to weep for mercy at thy feet!"

" Fiend !" cried Isandra, her eyes flashing with indignation, as she struggled violently to free herself from his grasp. " Is your soul so steeped in iniquity, that not one thought of the awful doom which awaits you can startle you

from your foul purpose]" and the maiden, by a convulsive effort, tore herself from his embraces, and with the speed of lightning fled from the apartment to the reception room.

The Count roused all his energies for the pursuit, determined not to lose his prey a second time. Nearer and nearer came her hated pursuer. Already had his fingers touched the extremities of her long curls, as they waved from her neck in wild disorder; a moment more, his hand rested upon her shoulder, when a female form glided swiftly from behind the arras of the window, and before the Count could check his forward movement, she plunged a dagger into his side. With a yell of agony he bounded a few paces into the air, and then fell heavily upon the floor. Isandra, unconscious of this new diversion in her favor, so noiseless and silent had been the movements of her almost unseen ally, with the frenzy of desperation, still imagining her persecutor to be upon her, flung herself down the stairs, swept through the hall, and at length she sunk exhausted upon the pavement of the narrow lane upon which the court-yard of the mansion opened

Beside the body of the Count, as he writhed in torture, stood his executioner, the moonbeams painting her death-wan features and loose robes as, with the fire of delirium in her eye, she seemed to count with vengeful accuracy each throe of mortal torture that palsied his quivering frame; and then she burst into a loud strain of triumphant rhapsody, as she addressed the dying soldier: " Adolphe Count St. Croix, dost thou know me? 'T was the arm of Adele, the earliest victim of thy falsehood and treachery, that struck the blow that rids the world of a monster. A moment more, and another name had been added to the dark catalogue of thy crimes." And she continued in a strain of mocking, as his limbs moved with pain, " aye, spurn me now, as of old, from your feet, when I knelt and prayed, as the dying sinner to his God, for one tender look, one short word of kindness from your lips. Yes, writhe on in your torment till your guilty soul oozes from your finger ends. Each pang is a thrill of delight that stirs anew the pulses of this withered heart. For years did you escape my vengeance; and my ceaseless

cry to Heaven was, that no hand but mine should antedate your doom, and I shall die contented since my prayer was heard. I searched among the stark and ghastly dead of many a bloody field, that I might tear from its mangled casement your treacherous heart, and feed the vulture with it. But kind fate guarded thee for this hour to make vengeance more complete by the manner of your death. Aye, let it make hell of your last moments here, that the soldier's honored death shall not be yours, nor martial tread or the cannon's roar your funeral dirge; nor yet shall you rest in the ancestral tomb, but unknelled and uncoftined, the vulture's maw and the mongrel throat shall be your sepulchre." Then, as the purple tide gushed from the wound, she shrieked, "not yet, Death—not yet rob me of my victim! one more mortal throe of agony to quench this burning thirst within. Oh, that this bubbling stream of life would filter thy soul away drop by drop through centuries of torture."

But the Count's last breath was breathed ; his whole . frame shook with nature's last convulsive effort—one flutter more of the pulse of life and all was done.

When Adele saw that the spirit had gone to its reckoning, she flung herself upon her knees and again screamed at the highest pitch of her voice—"vengeance —more vengeance, Heaven!—he shall not die yet. Can'st thou not bring the monster back again to life, and chain him to existence? There is the one spell that bound me to this earth broken. Adolphe, I will be thy accusing spirit." So saying, she plunged the dagger, yet warm with his blood, into her heart. At that moment the building shook to its very foundation, and the bodies of the seducer and his victim were blown into a thousand fragments by the explosion of a barrel of gunpowder in the vaults, ignited by the bursting of a shell.

But little more remains to be told. The garrison of Saragossa, exhausted by fatigue, famine, and the sword, capitulated, Pallafox, their heroic leader, having become delirious from over exertion.

Isandra, with her father and Raymond de Beauvoir, escaped that night to Tarragona, from whence, after a lapse of a few days, they sailed for England, and were subsequently united in the holy bonds of matrimony.



A REMEMBERED SCENE.

BY EDWARD J. PORTER.

And years have fled since I have lingered o'er The silvery waters of that moonlit bay—

So beautifully still as if it lay Hushed o'er its spirit's dreams—and yet before My vision it springs up, bright as of yore;

I gaze upon its loveliness, and stray Listless where sweeps ray shallop's noiseless way, While joyous tones of sweetness steal from shore, Where happy groups are dancing to the sound Of flute or castanet; and some beneath A bending olive, flowers and song enwreathes, While all the air seems passion-fraught around;

'Till, 'mid the gush of splendor bursting free.

The soul awakens.—Could it dream eternally!



THE STRANGE CAVALIER.

A TALE OF THE OLDEN TIME.

By H. SYMMES.

" Let me tell your fortune, pretty ladies—very good fortune to you, ma'am," cried a dark-eyed gipsy, as two ladies turned the corner of a beautifully-sequestered lane, while the last rays of a gorgeous sun were merging into the more voluptuous tinge of a summer twilight. " Oh, do let us have our fortune told—I should so like to know my fortune!" exclaimed the younger of the ladies, who leant upon the arm of her companion. "Nonsense, Annette," rejoined her friend, and by this time they had reached the spot where the sibyl was standing. Her appearance fully demonstrated her tribe; her face was of the most swarthy hue, but interesting in the expression ; her eyes were jet black; and her dark elf-locks, which hung dishevelled over her neck and shoulders, were partly concealed by a small hat that was tied under the chin by a paity-colored handkerchief; while her figure, of no ordinary mould, was encumbered by the tattered fragments of an old red cloak. The ladies paused for an instant to contemplate the object before them. "I can tell you," said she, addressing the younger lady, "what, mayhap, you will not like to hear. You will love, but you will not be loved again ; you will sigh, but no sigh will be returned to you; you will weep, but your tears will fall on your cheek like dew on the summer flower, that dries but to receive fresh moisture."

Without uttering a word, the ladies now turned, and hastily pursued their way homeward. They had wandered, attracted by the beauty of the evening, farther than they had intended. The Baroness D-, for so we must introduce her to our readers, had taken under her protection Annette De M-, who was an orphan, and the sole remaining branch of a noble family. The Baroness D- had herself been left an orphan at an early age. She had afterward married the Baron D-, who had been dead about two years at the time our tale commences, leaving her without progeny, her only child having died in its infancy. She had inherited her husband's vast estates, and was at this time

residing in her favorite castle, situated in the most beautiful of the midland counties of England.

The ladies' silently pursued their way until they reached the extensive avenue that formed the barrier to the noble domain. Trees of regular but enormous height were thickly studded on either side, and the Baroness frequently started at the echo of their footsteps as she pressed forward with her young companion. The moon had risen and now shone in silvery brightness, while not a zephyr fanned the foliage, nor a whisper broke upon the stillness of the night. They had reached

about the middle of the avenue, when they were alarmed by the sound of a horse's hoofs. Both started and fearfully looked behind them ; the figure of a man on horseback was distinctly visible; retreat or flight was alike impossible, for in another minute a cavalier, in complete armour, and mounted on a panting charger, stood beside them. In the next moment the knight sprung from the saddle-bow, and falling gracefully upon one knee before the Baroness, exclaimed—

"Fairy lady, deign to take pity upon a stranger Knight, who is pursued by his enemies; even now," cried he, with increased trepidation, "is a price set upon my head; my party have been defeated by some of Cromwell's army, and a number of my followers are slain. Deign then, kind lady, to grant me an asylum in your mansion for this night only; and I pledge you, on the faith of a true knight, to requite your hospitality."

" Sir Knight," replied the Baroness, " your request is granted: it is enough for me to know that you are a Royalist, and in danger; follow us then, and I promise you a safe retreat"

The Cavalier arose, and was profuse in his expressions of thankfulness. In silence they now pursued their way, until they reached the principal entrance of the castle. The Baroness rung at the massive portal, and in a few

seconds it was opened by an aged domestic.

" Morden, see that yon steed lacks not proper food; and for you, Sir Knight, I bid you welcome; you need not be apprehensive, I am mistress here, and there is none to thwart me." They were now ushered by several domestics through suites of rooms, until they reached one brilliantly illuminated, and furnished in a style of magnificence suited to the time; the walls were of oak richly carved; and the ceiling, which formed a cupola, was of the same material. Upon a marble pedestal stood an alabaster chandelier, in which were numerous lights, that gave a brilliancy to the whole apartment. The Baroness politely motioned her guest to be seated, and ordered the supper to be presently served. When the domestics had quitted the apartment, she arose, and taking a small silver lgmp from a table near her, she requested the Cavalier to follow her. " 8ir Knight," continued she, " while the domestics are preparing our repast, I will show you where you may conceal yourself, and where, even should your pursuers demand an entrance, they cannot discover you." Then turning to her young friend, she said, in a tone of assumed gaiety, " Annette, my love, take your lyre, it will wile away the time till our returnsaying this, she quitted the room, followed by the Cavalier. They proceeded through a long suite of rooms, which terminated in a winding gallery; here they paused to unlock a door, which discovered a narrow staircase; having ascended several steps, they found themselves in a spacious apartment hung with arras. It was perfectly

square. The Baroness advanced to one side of the room, and lifling the hanging, gently touched an unseen spring; instantly one of the panels disappeared, and displayed a room of more spacious dimensions than the former.

" Here, then, Sir Knight," exclaimed the Baroness, " you may find a safe retreat; I will myself teach you the virtue of the spring, that in case of a surprise, you may, without difficulty, find your way to this apartment."

Having satisfied herself that her guest was acquainted with the method of opening the panel, the Baroness hastened to return to the saloon, being fearful that Annette might be uneasy at her absence. The dulcet notes of the lyre reached them before they arrived at the apartment. Annette expressed her joy at their return; and, at the request of the Cavalier, sung a ballad with exquisite pathos and harmony.

Supper was now spread; the Baroness courteously invited her guest to partake of the rich viands that were set before him. The repast being ended, they entered into an interesting discussion upon the probable results of the fatal wars, that harrassed every part of the kingdom. The discourse had lasted about an hour, when the hearts of all present seemed to stand still, as a loud knocking was heard at the portal. " Fly, Sir Knight," cried the Baroness, hastily putting a lamp into his hand ; " your pursuers are here—but fear nothing— remember the secret spring!" The Cavalier pressed the hand from which he took the lamp, then hastily quitted the apartment.

The knocking was now renewed with redoubled violence; and the domestics were ordered to give parley. It was, indeed, some of Cromwell's party, who were in quest of their unfortunate victim. They loudly demanded admittance, which the Baroness, anxious to prolong the time for awhile, desired her servants to refuse. Soon, however, they accompanied their knocking with threats, and the porter was desired to suffer them to enter. A party of soldiers now rushed into the hall. They soon found their way to the saloon, where the Baroness and Annette were seated in trembling agitation. The foremost of the party, who seemed the chief in command, now spoke—

" We believe you to be the Baroness D-, and as

such, take you to l>e an adherent of Charles 8tuart; we, therefore, command you, in the name of the commonwealth, instantly to deliver up him you have concealed within these walls. This is our General's pleasure."

" You are correct in the conclusions you have formed of me," rejoined the Baroness; " but he whom you seek is not here; but go," she continued, " you have free access to every part of my mansion."

No sooner had the Baroness ceased speaking than the soldiers quitted the apartment to commence their search.

About an hour elapsed, during which time the two ladies sat in a trembling state of anxiety and apprehension. At length a heavy tread announced the return of the besiegers. Their voices were raised as if in deep altercation ; as they approached near the saloon, it sunk into audible murmurs, accompanied by muttered threats and imprecations. The leader of the band re-entered the apartment, and said, " we find that we have been mistaken, lady; but beware that you do not harbor any traitor, for you would sorely repent your rashness."

The man then quitted the room, and commanding the soldiers to follow him, the portal once more closed upon the unwelcome visitants. The Baroness having assured herself that peace was restored, hastened to that part of the Castle where she had secured the unfortunate stranger. As she trod along the spacious apartments, she often paused to listen, and in imagination, thought she could hear the dreadful imprecations that had escaped the soldiers; but all was still, and she reached the door of the captive Knight. Great was the Cavalier's joy at beholding her, and profusely did he pour forth his expressions of thankfulness to his deliverer. They continued to converse upon what had passed for some time after they had reached the saloon. The Baroness posted two of her domestics in the great hall for the night in case of a second alarm; and her guest entreated permission to watch with them, but this his kind hostess would not consent to. They now separated for the night.

The next morning, when they met at the breakfast table, they recapitulated the events of the preceding night, and a general thanksgiving was offered to

that Power which had protected them. If the Baroness and her young friend had been charmed with the elegant deportment of the Cavalier on the previous evening, they were now not less delighted at the graceful polish of his manners, and the refined intelligence that pervaded his conversation. When breakfast was over he proposed to depart; but the Baroness so warmly urged the necessity of his remaining until his pursuers had quitted the precincts of the Castle, and so strongly animadverted upon the probability that some secret emissary might be lying in wait for him, that he consented to remain for a few days.

The time passed uninterruptedly in agreeable and interesting discourse, which was occasionally varied by the sweet tones of the lyre, to which Annette sung in a strain of touching melody, and at the request of the stranger would frequently repeat her lay. It was on the fifth day of the Knight's sojourn at the Castle. The Baroness, Annette, and the Cavalier were all seated in the saloon, watching the shades of evening closing around them.

"Tomorrow, my kind friends, I must depart," exclaimed the Knight; "by dawn of day my steed must be in readiness; and," continued he, addressing the Baroness, at the same time unclasping from his neck a gold chain of exquisite workmanship, "let me present you with this, and remember that you may claim every thing at my hands, for my debt to you cannot easily be repaid." Saying this, he imprinted a kiss on the hand that was extended toward him.

On the following morning, at dawn of day, Morden was in the court-yard, holding the bridle-rein of the noble charger. In an instant the Knight had vaulted in his saddle; the old porter presented the stirrup-cup, then gave the parting benediction. The Knight gave one glance at a window, where stood the Baroness and Annette, who had both risen at that early hour in compliment to their guest; thrice he saluted the fair inmates—in another minute the horse and his rider had disappeared.

It was on the twentieth of May, 1661, that the Baroness and her friend were seated by an open window in the spacious library; the castle clock had tolled the hour of noon—then the accustomed dinner-hour for all persons of quality.

"We must begin our journey to-morrow, dear Annette," exclaimed the Baroness, "for I would behold ! our beloved Monarch's triumphal entry to the throne of his ancestors; and who knows," continued she, as she gazed anxiously upon her young friend's pallid countenance—"who knows but we may see him who once sought shelter within these walls; such an event would, I know, give my dear friend pleasure." Annette spoke not; but a pale blush overspread her fine features; still she remained silent. The remainder of the day was spent in making preparations for their departure. On the following morning, the two friends, attended by a train of domestics, set out for the metropolis; and at the expiration of a week, during which nothing particular happened, arrived at the entrance of the vast city. It was on the very day that the populace were assembling to welcome their sovereign. Triumphal arches, decorated with flowers and interspersed with oak-boughs were raised across the road, and at intervals through every street. The windows in all the houses were adorned with garlands, or hung with costly drapery; the bells of the neighboring churches were sending forth a joyous peal, while drums and trumpets resounded from every quarter. An immense multitude, both in carriage and on foot, thronged every avenue. The Baroness commanded her coachman to drive up one side, as a deafening shout rent the air, intimating the monarch's approach. Another shout—and another ascended from the people; all eyes were turned to one individual. Mounted on a milk-white charger, his head uncovered, and repeatedly bowing to the multitude, sat—Charles II! The Baroness's attention was suddenly called to her young friend. She, too, had looked that way ; but

the sight had been too much for her—Annette de Montmorency had

fainted. She had seen that face before; it was the stranger Knight—it was Charles Stuart!

